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ASCS BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture

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EMERGENCY CONSERVATION MEASURES []

Emergency conservation measures are authorized by Public Law 85-58, the Third Supplemental Appropriations Act, enacted June 21, 1957. This law authorizes emergency measures in any State or area in which it is determined by the ASC county committee, in consultation with the State ASC Committee, that emergency conservation measures are needed to control severe wind erosion on farmlands, or to rehabilitate farmlands damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes or other natural disasters.

The law also provides for the allocation of emergency funds, which are used to share with farmers and ranchers the cost of emergency conservation measures needed to meet the new conservation problems caused by the disaster in a given area. The law requires, however, that the natural disaster must be such as to create new conservation problems, which, if not treated, would: (1) impair or endanger the land; (2) materially affect the productive capacity of the land; (3) represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and (4) would be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

Funding for the program has been authorized on an annual basis from time to time by appropriations approved by the Congress.

Subject to availability of funds, an ASC county committee, in consultation with the State ASC committee, is authorized to implement the ECM program for eligible farmers.

Eligibility for ECM assistance is determined by the ASC county committee on an individual basis, considering the type and extent of damage and the farmer's capability to rehabilitate the damaged farmland.

Typical of emergency practices to combat or repair damage by wind erosion or sustained drought are emergency tillage operations, emergency cover to prevent wind erosion, and constructing or improving reservoirs, wells, springs, and seeps for livestock and irrigation water.

In flood disaster areas, emergency conservation practices frequently include removal of debris, the leveling of sand or gravel deposits, and the replacement of other previously functioning conservation installations destroyed or damaged by floods.
